

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

Catalogue of the Lepidoptera Phalænæ in the British Museum.
Volume II. *Catalogue of the Arctiadae (Nolinæ, Lithosianæ) in the Collection of the British Museum.* By Sir GEORGE F. HAMPSON, Bart. 8vo. Pp. xx, 589. Plates xviii.—xxxv. London: printed by order of the Trustees, 1900.

THE first Catalogue of Moths (Lepidoptera Heterocera as they used to be called, or Lepidoptera Phalænæ as some recent authors prefer to call them) was published in thirty-five small volumes, without plates, between 1854 and 1866, and was edited by the late Francis Walker. Notwithstanding the numerous errors which have fairly or unfairly been charged against this work, its publication lent an enormous impetus to the study, for it enumerated upwards of 20,000 species, most of which, except in a portion of the Micro-Lepidoptera, were described, with full synonymy in the case of known species.

But Walker's Catalogue is now quite out of date, and the earlier volumes are entirely out of print, and therefore the Trustees of the British Museum have projected a new Catalogue covering the same ground, but profusely illustrated with plates and figures (rendered all the more necessary by the stringency of the official regulations, which do not admit of specimens once registered ever being lent out of the building), and have entrusted the commencement of the work to Sir George F. Hampson. We say the commencement, for though Sir George is not an old man, and his energy and rapidity of work are well known, it will take two or three men's official lifetimes at least to complete the work on the same plan, unless several men are employed to work at different families at the same time.

The two volumes which have already appeared (in 1898 and 1900) include descriptions of 2377 species, and yet the ground which they cover only corresponds to a comparatively small portion of the first two volumes of Walker's Catalogue, with the corresponding supplements. This will be enough to show the enormous increase in our knowledge of the subject within the last fifty years.

Sir George is working under very favourable circumstances, for the entomological section of the reference library at South Kensington is to all intents and purposes practically complete; and the collection of Moths has been so largely increased lately, that it is now, beyond dispute, one of the very best in the world, if not incontestably the best. Moreover, in the earlier families he has the advantage of the assistance of Mr. Kirby's approximately complete Catalogue of Sphingæ and Bombycæ, published in 1892, and for later years the 'Zoological Record' &c.; so that the chances of anything important being overlooked are reduced to a minimum.

Sir George Hampson's methods of work are so similar in all his publications that those who have seen one volume of his work on the 'Moths of India' or one volume of the present series, may form a fair judgment of the whole. All the species are briefly described (the bulk of the book forbids very lengthy descriptions, which are, moreover, less necessary in the case of recognizably figured species),

and the numerous tables of genera and species will be very useful. We are glad to see, too, that transformations are described in the case of the comparatively few species in which they are known. We may mention that the excellent (and, in the present volume, crowded) coloured plates are by Mr. Horace Knight.

MISCELLANEOUS.

On the 'Ankündigung eines systematischen Werkes von den Schmetterlingen der Wienergegend' of Schiffermüller and Denis. By LOUIS B. PROUT, F.E.S.

THE well-known 'Systematisches Verzeichniss der Schmetterlinge der Wienergegend' by the above-named authors is invariably cited by modern writers as dating from 1776, and I am not aware that that date has ever been challenged. I have, however, for some years past, been acquainted with a copy of the same work under a different title, bearing date 1775, and have been somewhat puzzled by it; but as my studies have not hitherto necessitated a critical investigation of the work, I have not until quite recently taken up the question seriously. In doing so, however, I find sufficient evidence to be worthy of publication, and by the advice of Mr. John Hartley Durrant, with whom I have been in correspondence on the subject, I have prepared the following notes.

In the library of the British Museum (Bloomsbury) is the copy which first arrested my attention, coming from the library of Sir Joseph Banks, and quite accurately catalogued by Dryander in 'Bibl. Banks.' ii. p. 254. The title reads "Ankündigung | eines | systematischen Werkes | von den Schmetterlingen | der Wienergegend | herausgegeben | von einigen Lehrern | am k. k. Theresianum. | Wien, | verlegt Augustin Bernardi Buchhändler. 1775." Another copy, identical with this, was acquired by Smith in 1784 from Linne's library, and is, of course, preserved by the Linnean Society; this latter is of considerable interest, as it is still in the original boards, while that at Bloomsbury has been re-bound, and lettered on the back "Ankündigung eines Werkes von den Schmetterlingen der Wienergegend. Wien. 1775." With the exception of the titlepage and the frontispiece, this early issue is identical with the well-known 'Systematisches Verzeichniss' of 1776, so that, as Mr. Sherborn says (*in litt.*, 13th Feb. 1900), "there was only one printing of the body of the work—the same broken letters occur in every copy." Mr. Sherborn further writes:—"Note that the 1775 T.P. is a 'woodblock,' not type set, and the 1776 T.P. is engraved on copper." The frontispiece and plates are *coloured*, but the former is arranged as in the *uncoloured* 1776 copies. A third issue (1776 also) has coloured plates, but the frontispiece is somewhat differently designed. I have seen no copy of the 'Ankündigung' excepting the two above mentioned, but the following bibliographical references deal with it.

Mr. Durrant called my attention to the fact that Eiselt, 'Ges. Syst. Lit. Ins.' 203 (1836), and Percheron, ii. 39-40 (1837), both